United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1241
6 October 1992

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council votes unanimously to authorize UNPROFOR to assume responsibility for complete withdrawal of Yugoslav Army from Croatia; in second unanimous decision tonight, Council asks Secretary-General to establish Commission of Experts, as a matter of urgency, to consider information from States on violations of humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia and to report to Council on its conclusions; Council to hold consultations later tonight with a view to a formal meeting on the situation in Angola.

+ Security Council's President expresses Council members' serious concern at situation in Georgia; calls on parties to abide by agreement signed in Moscow on 3 September.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina protests violation of "no-fly zone by Belgrade regime and its proxies" in that country.

+ Secretary-General and Foreign Minister of Ukraine to sign agreement on establishment of United Nations Interim Office in Ukraine.

+ There can be no sustainable development while there are over 1 billion homeless people in the world, Secretary-General tells World Habitat Day observance at Headquarters.

+ General Assembly hears address by President of Botswana; statements by Deputy Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Solomon Islands, Bahamas; by Foreign Ministers of Namibia, Philippines, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Honduras and Barbados; Chairman of Delegation of Sri Lanka. Yesterday, Assembly heard Guinea-Bissau, Chad and Uzbekistan.

+ Development role of United Nations in economic and social restructuring stressed, as Second Committee begins debate.

* * *

The Security Council this evening unanimously approved the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Croatia, including the steps taken by

(more)

For information media—not an official record

the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia to ensure control of the Peruca Dam. The Council also authorized UNPROFOR to assume responsibility for the complete withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army from Croatia, the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula and the removal of heavy weapons from neighbouring areas of Croatia and Montenegro, in cooperation, as appropriate, with the European Community Monitoring Mission.

Under resolution 779 (1992) adopted, the Council endorsed the principles agreed by the Presidents of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) on 30 September that all statements or commitments made under duress, particularly those related to land and property, "are wholly null and void and that all displaced persons have the right to return in peace to their former homes".

The Council further urged that all parties and others concerned in Croatia comply with the obligations under the United Nations plan, especially with regard to the withdrawal and the disarming of all forces, including paramilitary forces.

In a second decision tonight, the Council unanimously asked the Secretary-General to establish, as matter of urgency, an impartial Commission of Experts to examine and analyze the information on violations of humanitarian law, including grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions being committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

By adopting resolution 780 (1992) the Council also reaffirmed its request that all States, relevant United Nations bodies, and relevant organizations make this information available within 30 days of the adoption of tonight's resolution and to provide assistance to the Commission of Experts as appropriate.

By tonight's text, the Council also asked the Commission to act on any further information it may obtain through its own investigations or through the efforts of other persons or bodies. It also asked the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the establishment of the Commission as well as on the Commission's conclusions, and to take account of these conclusions in any recommendations for further appropriate steps.

By its resolution, the Council once again expressed its grave alarm at the continuing reports of widespread violations of humanitarian law occurring within the territory of the former Yugoslavia and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including reports of mass killings and the continuance of the practice of ethnic cleansing.

The Security Council was holding consultations tonight with a view to a formal meeting to consider the situation in Angola.

* * *

In a statement to the press tonight, the Council's President, Jean-Bernard Merimée of France, expressed the Council members' very serious

(more)

concern at the situation in Georgia and called on the parties to abide by the agreement they had signed in Moscow on 3 September.

This action follows a request by Georgia's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs for an urgent meeting of the Council to examine the situation in Georgia and Avkhazia. Mr. Mérimée also informed correspondents that the Georgian Vice Minister had requested that a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and 10 to 15 United Nations observers be sent to the area.

Mr. Mérimée also said that, as soon as the Council receives the Secretary-General's report on the situation, it would consider the appropriate measures to be taken.

* * *

Bosnia and Herzegovina has protested what it describes as the violation of the "no-fly zone by the Belgrade regime and its proxies in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

In a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 4 October, President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina said all military flights over his country had been banned at the London Conference on Former Yugoslavia, but like almost all other proposed and/or accepted agreements by the aggressor, this agreement had been broken.

President Izebegovic urged Security Council to enforce the "no-fly zone" without delay, saying that a peaceful solution could never come about if one side was permitted to consistently abandon its promises and agreements.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Foreign Minister Anatoliy M. Zlenko of Ukraine were expected to sign an agreement at Headquarters today for the establishment of a new United Nations Interim Office in Ukraine.

In March, the Secretary-General informed the Foreign Ministers of six members of the Commonwealth of Independent States of his intention to establish United Nations Interim Offices with information and development components in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. These unified offices represent a new initiative on the part of the Secretary-General aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the field.

The agreement signed today is the fifth of its kind. An Interim Office was inaugurated in Belarus on 8 September, and others are expected to be opened shortly in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a statement yesterday that there could be no sustainable development while there were over 1 billion

(more)

homeless people in the world. The statement was delivered at the World Habitat Day observance at Headquarters.

Not only could there be no sustainable development as long as millions remained without adequate housing, "there can be no peace or security either", the Secretary-General stated. He went on to say that shelter was a key word for the United Nations. "In a wider, more political sense, shelter and protection sum up our mission...they remind us that the Charter of the United Nations is founded on 'faith in the dignity and worth of the human person'", the Secretary-General said.

* * *

Opening the General Assembly debate this morning, Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia said the situation in South Africa "had remained explosive and dangerous and therefore warranting international pressure on the South African Government". He called for a prolonged United Nations presence there to monitor the violence and assist in the transition until the emergence of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa.

Mr. Gurirab also expressed support "for and solidarity with all the liberation movements and democratic forces" in the violence-torn country. He called on Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party to rejoin Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk in the negotiations on the new South Africa.

Turning the environmental concerns, the Foreign Minister said the Rio Earth Summit had made it clear that global economic development and environmental protection go hand in hand. Namibia, itself a dry, semi-desert country had adopted a "Green Plan" outlining a comprehensive framework for sustainable environmental principles and endorsed the proposed Convention on Desertification, he said, urging that elaboration on the convention start during this current session. Apartheid colonialism had subjected Namibia's renewable and non-renewable resources to "ruthless plunder mainly for the benefit of foreigners", he said, adding that his Government had taken steps to put an end to the disastrous situation.

Kenya, as a neighbour to Somalia, had had to bear more than its fair share of Somali refugees, now totalling more than half a million people, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, Wilson Ndolo Ayah, told the Assembly this morning. He added that close to six million out of Somali's population of seven million people were in serious distress, with some two million condemned to certain death before this human tragedy is eventually brought to a conclusion.

The Kenyan Foreign Minister expressed his Government's gratitude for the efforts by the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General in charge of Humanitarian Affairs in putting together a comprehensive and multi-faceted programme of action covering humanitarian relief, the consolidation of ceasefire, the reduction of organized violence and national reconciliation. However, he said, while his country envisaged humanitarian assistance as of

(more)

the utmost priority in the present circumstances, it still stressed the necessity for a round table between the warring parties. There is absolutely no alternative to dialogue, he said, urging the Somali leaders to "put the interest of Somali people before their narrow and personal interests".

The Foreign Minister of the Philippines, Roberto R. Romulo, reminded the Assembly of his country's return to democracy in 1986 and its recent national elections five months ago. The new leadership had chosen, through its policies, to ride the crest of the wave of economic liberalization because it believed that it was the best road to sustained economic growth and a better life, he explained.

A few week ago in Jakarta, the Philippines had joined the Non-Aligned Movement, which it found larger, stronger and more relevant than ever before. Many of the old divisions in the Movement had closed, and a new cohesion had been found. Moreover, Mr. Romulo said, the Movement had turned more of its attention to problems of trade, finance, technology, and all those other things that make up the economic relations among nations.

He went on to say that the continuing scourge of poverty, the rapid increase in population, together with advances in transportation and communication, had given rise to a new phenomenon -- the massive migration of labor. As one of the largest sources of this migration, the Philippines were convinced that it was now time for the international community to deal with this phenomenon on a planned and strategic basis and on an international scale.

Askar Ch. Aitmatov, the Foreign Minister of Kyrgystan, told the General Assembly this morning that, from the beginning, his country saw "no other alternative as to how to use our obtained right for independent choice but for the establishment of pluralistic democracy". He said it was the only medium for creating a decent life for the individual and to ensure political, economic and spiritual freedoms.

The country was passing through a hard economic crisis, he said, aggravated by natural disasters, including earthquakes and floods which caused human losses and enormous material damage. It would be difficult for his country alone to overcome this problem, he said, reminding the Assembly of the importance of economic, financial, technical and humanitarian assistance provided to his country by the world community. He also welcomed the forthcoming opening of the United Nations Interim Office in Bishek which would promote the integration of Kyrgystan in the fields of international, technical, scientific and humanitarian cooperation.

Kyrgystan was open for mutually beneficial relations and ready for partnership with those countries which shared its ideals of freedom and democracy, he said. His country attributed great importance to maintaining cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independence and intended to act as a peaceloving, neutral non-nuclear State, he said. It was also ready to sign a Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear arms and to approach other issues of strengthening of strategic and military security.

(more)

Mario Carias Zapata, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, said this morning that a new era at the United Nations was beginning, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report "Agenda for Peace". That plan would lead the way to building new methods for international diplomacy. Honduras supported the greater use of international organizations, such as the International Court of Justice. The Court had just handed down a decision on a 100-year-old border dispute between Honduras and El Salvador, with which both countries would comply, he said, announcing that his country would also offer its armed forces for use in United Nations peace-keeping missions.

The Government of El Salvador and representatives of the country's insurgency movement had brought an end to conflict in El Salvador in January 1992, Mr. Zapata said. Honduras supported demobilization of conflicting forces and the integration of insurgents in regular life. The entering into force of that agreement would have broad implications for peace and development in Central America, he said. The ideas laid out in the System of Integration of Central America could now be realized.

Sir Ketumile Masire, President of Botswana, speaking about the situation in South Africa, told the Assembly this afternoon that, at the time of their suspension three months ago, negotiations undertaken by the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) had undeniably achieved positive result, considering that less than two years ago the apartheid edifice was still very much intact.

Furthermore, he said, the recent massacres at the bantustan of Ciskei seems to have had a sobering effect on the South African leaders, showing, if anything at all, that the negotiation's process which just resumed was the only hope for South Africa. President Masire further welcomed the Security Council's decision to deploy United Nations observers to South Africa. The involvement of the international community in the process of change in South Africa was a crucial element, he said.

Turning to the African economic crisis issue, he insisted that concerted efforts should be made to translate the United Nations new agenda for Africa into concrete programmes and projects that could put his continent on the path to economic recovery and development. The Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), a forum bringing together policy makers from Africa and its international partners, had made a significant contribution to the new consensus-building process since its inception in Maastricht in 1990.

The South Pacific region was unique because the marine environment was an integral part of its existence, Baddeley Devesi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health of Solomon Islands, told the Assembly this afternoon. That was why his country considered environmental questions important and had welcomed the decision made by France to suspend its nuclear testing in the South Pacific region, and expressed the hope that this suspension could become permanent.

The Minister also drew attention to the vulnerability of small island countries to external and internal security threats, saying "undesirable,

(more)

criminal and atrocious activities and behaviour both from within and outside of the region" continued to threaten the sovereignty, security and economic integrity of the South Pacific countries. These undesirable activities could not be addressed at the regional level alone, he continued, urging the active involvement of and collaboration with relevant international agencies in that area.

On decolonization, the Minister noted with appreciation the positive measures pursued in New Caledonia by the French authorities in the implementation of the Matignon Accord and called for a continuing dialogue among all political parties in that territory to ensure that self-determination can be achieved.

The Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, Stanley Kalpagé, said this afternoon that, for over half a century, his country had had a proud record of uninterrupted respect for the electoral verdict. In Sri Lanka, he went on, steps were being taken to establish a Human Rights Commission to strengthen the fulfillment of its constitutional obligations relating to fundamental rights.

Efforts to establish a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean were continuing, he said. The recent Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Jakarta took cognizance of that view and reiterated the determination to continue those efforts.

On the issue of regional organizations, Mr. Kalpagé said Sri Lanka had the honour this year to be elected as Chairman of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), which was seeking to promote trade and commerce among countries belonging to the organization.

In his statement to the Assembly this afternoon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Barbados, Maurice A. King, urged that the participation of small States in United Nations peace-keeping operations be encouraged and facilitated by the Organization. A number of small countries had been unable to play a part in traditional peace-keeping operations simply because they lacked the logistical military capability for so doing, he said.

The expanded dimensions of peace-keeping had provided the possibility for participation by small States in other fields in which they may have expertise, he said, such as human rights monitoring and the supply of civilian and police personnel. He also welcomed the Norwegian proposal for the establishment of a special United Nations Institute for education, training in peace-keeping and related activities as a means to respond to these new dimensions.

Mr. King also welcomed the serious debate now taking place on reforming and strengthening the economic and social mandate of the Organization. However, any such reform must be consistent with the provisions of the Charter and seek to ensure universality and accessibility. He cautioned that care must be taken "not to exclude the small and powerless". The emphasis currently given to developmental issues within the administrative structure of

the Organization did not reflect the priority accorded to those issues by a majority of member States, he said.

The Barbadian Minister also condemned the usurpation of the authority of the legitimate Government of President Aristide in Haiti. If the electoral process that was monitored and authenticated at every step by the United Nations could be overturned with impunity, he asked, "what message are we conveying to would-be dictators and what assurance are we providing for the fledgling democracies in the region?".

Citing "almost three decades of the serious problem of illegal Haitian immigration", which had subjected his country's economic, health and welfare agencies to unexpected demands, the Foreign Minister of the Bahamas, Orville A. Turnquest, pleaded with the international community this afternoon, to come to the aid of the Haitian people. He expressed support for United Nations efforts aimed at strengthening the initiatives of the Organization of American States (OAS) and "implored all concerned to continue to use peaceful means to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Haitian situation".

The Bahamian Minister also decried the problems of drug abuse, drug trafficking and illicit production which had continued to haunt the international community with catastrophic effects on individual societies. He affirmed his Government's support for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in its efforts to provide valuable assistance to countries fighting the drug menace. The most significant element in the fight against the drug trade was cooperation between States, he said, pledging his Government's continued collaboration with its neighbours to fight against the drug menace.

Mahamat Ali Adoum, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, told the Assembly last night that the civil wars which marked the last decade of the twentieth century had seriously threatened peoples' desires for peace and security. Aware of their own recent internal conflict, the people of Chad were perhaps not in a position to preach, he said, but arms control was an absolute necessity, and the registry of weapons was a welcome proposal.

The democratic process in Chad was irreversible, he said, reminding delegates that his country had enacted a law laying down guidelines for the functioning of political parties in a pluralistic democratic framework and had set a schedule for the holding of a "sovereign national conference" by early 1993.

Like many other countries on the African continent, Chad faced an unprecedented economic and financial crisis, he said. Measures taken by the Government to cope were met with strenuous trade union opposition, and strikes were held in May, June, July and August. To allow the measures to take effect, the Government had negotiated and had, however, concluded a truce on social questions for the rest of the year. To further reduce expenditure, the Government was also pursuing its reconstruction of Chad's army by reducing its strength from 50,000 to 20,000 men and officers, with technical and financing from the French Government. The revitalization of Chad's economy, he said,

(more)

was being carried out in a political context which was not always conducive to democratization, adding that there were pockets of resistance to change which had been overcome thanks to the Government's dialogue-oriented approach.

External debt, insufficiency of resources and declines in export earnings, all compounded by natural disasters, contributed to accentuating the degradation of socio-economic conditions in many countries in Africa, Boubacar Touré, Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, said yesterday morning. A new framework for cooperation was required, one that involved sufficient resources, debt reductions and sustainable solutions to commodity problems, he said.

The search for a solution to the problem of foreign debt would not only require international solidarity and responsibility on all sides, but also the recognition of the objectives of growth for developing countries. Mr. Touré urged the international community to take urgent and appropriate action to adopt a consistent programme of cooperation for the development of developing countries and, above all, Africa, which he called "an almost forgotten continent".

Ubaidulla A.Abdurazzakov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, expressed deep concern yesterday afternoon about the development of the situation in neighbouring Tadjikistan, which was near civil war, he said. The international danger was that the armed clashes of the fighting forces, with thousands of victims among the civilians, could easily spread to the neighbouring Central Asian States where the people would be involved in an endless fratricidal war.

The border between Tadjikistan and Afghanistan where there were hundreds of thousands of armed men, remained open, he added. The actions of extremists from those armed groups which were instigated by those who played on the national and religious feelings of the people could have unpredictable consequences.

* * *

The development role of the United Nations in the context of restructuring the Organization's economic and social fields emerged as a major theme of this morning's debate on the world economic situation in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

Among those participating in the debate, Peru said the new format of the Economic and Social Council should be modified by eliminating its Committees, and the Council should exercise its primordial role of coordination of the development activities. Japan said any reform measure should be designed to enhance, not weaken, the coordination function of the Council. Canada said the reform process should give the Council a role of providing political direction and impetus, combined with the power to steer the development agencies.

(more)

Addressing the Committee for the first time, the representative of Croatia said his country was suffering from the effects of a poorly managed communist economy and attacks from an aggressor, which had resulted in unprecedented destruction of human, cultural and industrial resources. Extensive international support was badly needed to alleviate the effects of the war, which had produced a large flow of refugees. There was no better place for the United Nations to exercise its capacity to resolve humanitarian emergencies, he added.

Yesterday, Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development, Ji Chauzhu, warned that an economic calamity could ensue if the world community failed to tackle such issues as famine, massive debt, political instability, rising tides of economic refugees and the absence of meaningful economic policy. He said the economic destinies of all the member States were linked and called for international efforts to secure the collective economic ship, without which all would sink together.

* *** *